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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
 INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Syria

DATE: 25X1A6a

SUBJECT Government Effort to Weaken
Opposition

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1. It is reported that the Syrian Government has seriously weakened the Liberal Party (Hizb al-Ahrar) prior to elections by detaching from it Nazhat Mamluk, an ardent and influential Party member. The Party is notably pro-Hashimite and composed largely of elements of the old Shahbandar Party. (The Shahbandarists, followers of Dr. 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar, one of the leaders of the 1925-27 revolt, have opposed Jamil Mardam and the National Bloc for a number of years.) Nazhat Mamluk is an old-time Shahbandarist, as well as an advocate of Abdallah's Greater Syria. Source reports that his friendship with Abdallah, his open purse, and his wide influence in Damascus have contributed much to the Hashimite cause. Mamluk is a wealthy landowner who was once director of police in North Syria.
2. The Government attempted to lure him away from his opposition activities by offering him the Directorship of MIRA, the Government wheat monopoly. This position is a tempting one, as it provides almost unlimited patronage out of the range of normal governmental control and accounting, and it offers enormous opportunities for personal profit through the diversion and sale of government wheat. Mamluk is reported to have accepted the Government's offer, thereby disqualifying himself as a candidate for election and an opponent of Government policies.

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